THE EVENING STAR.
PUBLISHED DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY.
AT THE STAR BUILDINGS,
1101 Pennsylvania Avenue, corner 11th St., by
The Evening Star Newspaper Company,
S. H. KAUFFMANN, Pres't.
New York Office, 88 Potter Building.

THE EVENING STAR is served to subscribers in the city by carriers, on their own account, at 10 cents per week, or 44c. per month. Copies at the counter 2 cents each. By mail—anywhere in the United States or Canada—postage prepaid—50 cents per month.

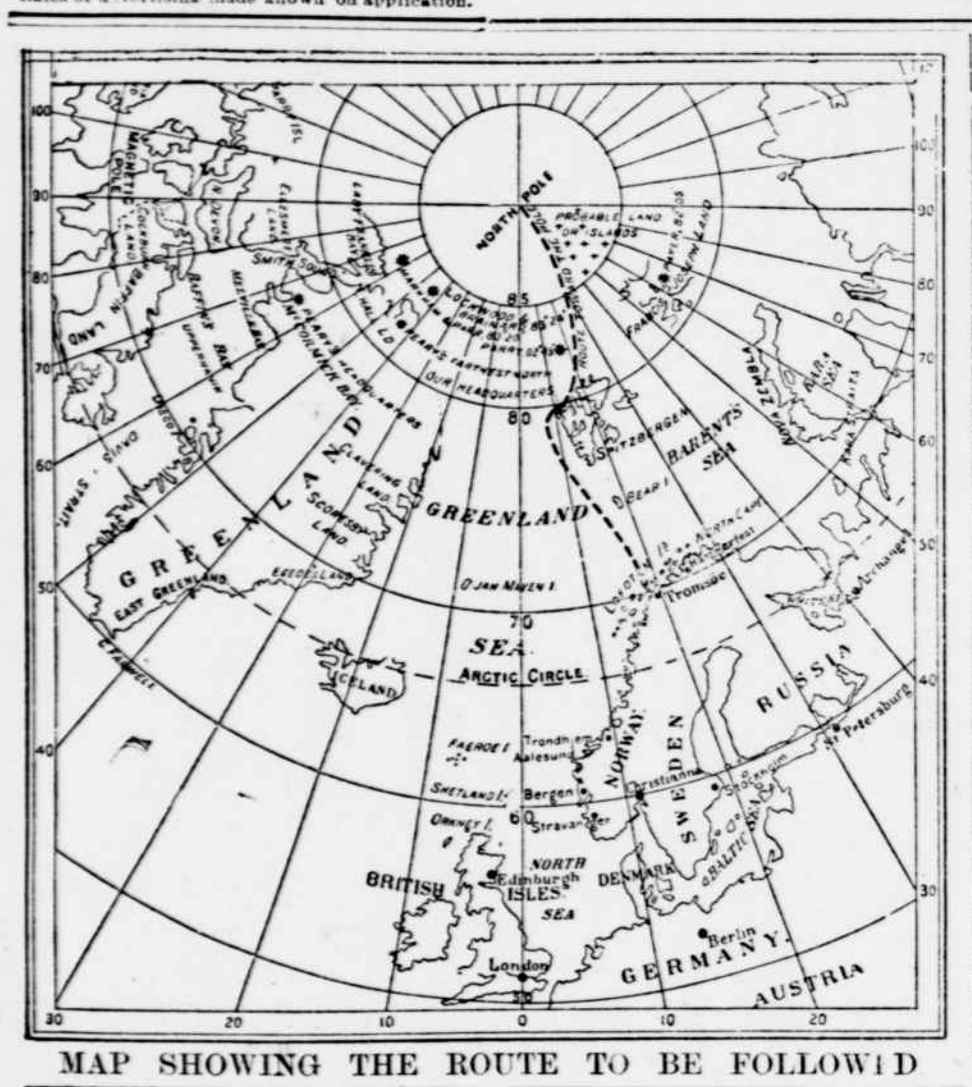
SATURDAY QUINTUPLE SHEET STAR $1.00 per year, with foreign postage added, $3.00.

(Entered at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., as second-class mail matter.)

All mail subscriptions must be paid in advance. Rates of advertising made known on application.

Part 3. **The Evening Star.** Pages 17-20.

WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1894—TWENTY PAGES.



MAP SHOWING THE ROUTE TO BE FOLLOWED

TO THE NORTH POLE

A Washington Newspaper Man's Exploring Expedition.

MONTHS IN THE ICE FIELDS.

To Begin Where Most Expeditions Have Stopped.

A SUMMER DASH TO THE NORTH POLE

The Probability of Solving the Arctic Problem.

THE SCIENCE OF SLEDGING

Written for The Evening Star.

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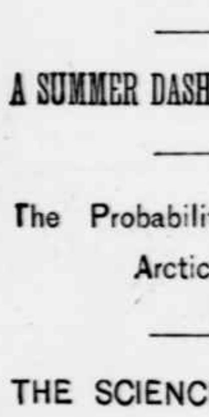


ON THE 14TH DAY of March I shall sail from New York by the steamer Britanic en route for the frozen regions of the far north. I am going toward the north pole, and to it if that shall prove possible. There will be in my party three Americans besides myself—Prof. Owen B. French, who comes from the United States coast and geodetic survey, with high reputation as a scientific man and for work in the field in Alaska and the west; Thomas B. Mohun, M. D., who has been in successful practice for some years in Washington, and who is admirably equipped in learning and experience for the responsible work before him, and Charles C. Dodge of the Navy Department, a capable photographer and artist. These three young men have been selected from among scores of applicants, and it is believed none but good accounts will be given of them during the coming summer's campaign in the arctics.

In Norway ten more men join my party—hardy young Norwegians, enthusiastic in exploration as were their ancestors, and a number of them university men devoted to the pursuit of knowledge in the fields of botany, geology and other sciences. A number of our Norwegians have had experience in the ice fields of the Arctic ocean as whale and seal hunters, and are adepts in the arts of navigation and travel incident to that hazardous calling. No people in the world are more resourceful and ingenious than the Americans; none more brave or steadfast in the face of difficulties than the Norsemen. I think the combination will be a good one.

The True Road to the Pole.

Most arctic expeditions with which Americans are familiar approach the pole by the way of Smith Sound. Even the English have chosen the Greenland route for most of their efforts. But we do not go that way, strewn with wrecks of ships, bleaching bones and dead hopes as it is. We choose, rather, that true highway to the far north carved out of the ice by the influence of the gulf stream in the Norwegian sea. The same warm waters from the south that give to Norway a comparatively mild climate, with ports open the year round in latitudes, which, in Greenland, are frozen fast nine or ten months of the year, wash the western shores of the islands of Spitzbergen and leave them moderately free of ice, except in midwinter. Nor do we plan to reach the north pole in a ship. The vessel has not yet been built that will sail to the pole, or nearer it than five hundred miles. Navigation to the pole has failed often enough to be abandoned till airships take the place of marine vessels.

After putting the finishing touches upon our outfit at the town of Tromsoe, far north in Norway, we fourteen men sail, about the first day of May, for the island of Spitzbergen, which lies to the east of northern Greenland. There, at Dane's Island, where is a fine harbor, we shall establish our headquarters. At this point we shall be under the shadow of the eightieth parallel of north latitude, that circle high on the map which many indomitable arctic explorers have never reached, and which but few have passed. For all but the most fortunate or persistent it has marked the limit of progress to the northward.

The Polar Half-Way Station.

Doubtless many people will be surprised to learn that in less than a week we expect to steam in our staunch little ice-working sealer from civilization to this high northern latitude. Barring accident we shall make the voyage in four days. Tromsoe, which has the Atlantic cable and a tri-weekly mail to the south, is very nearly in latitude 70. Dane's Island lacks but a few miles of the 80th parallel. The latter is, therefore, the half-way house to the pole—ten degrees or 700 statute miles from civilization, and exactly the same distance from that northern termination of the axis of our earth known as the north pole.

This western coast of Spitzbergen is every year accessible to steam or sailing vessels early in the season. It is the only point in the circum-polar region which affords this tremendous advantage. By the Spitzbergen route we shall, unless extraordinary conditions present themselves, reach without effort or loss of time, without the necessity of a previous wintering in the arctic region, with our vitality unimpaired and our men and equipment fresh and strong, the same latitude at which Greely wintered, as far north as De Long went, almost as near to the pole as Hall penetrated, hundreds of miles farther north than Franklin or any of the early explorers progressed, and within about three degrees as far as the farthest ever achieved by man. In other words, our journey proper begins at Spitzbergen, substantially at the latitude in which other efforts have come to an end.

Our business is not at Spitzbergen. That is only our half-way house, our point of departure, our stepping stone to the inner polar region. Though an uninhabited land of wonderful scenery, of romantic and tragic history, of rare sport with ice bear, walrus, reindeer, seal, foxes and birds, we shall not tarry on its shores longer than a few days in which to land our stores and establish a headquarters station in a comfortable house already standing there. Leaving a couple of trusty men in charge of our station, and with a safe harbor near by for our steamer, we push on.

Crossing the Desert of Ice.

Whither? And over what sort of a road? Straight to the north, toward the pole, toward the ice-locked secret of the unknown region, over and through the dreadful pack ice of the Arctic ocean. The edge of the ice pack or the frozen surface of the sea will be found between latitude 80 and 81. The farther north it is the better we shall be pleased, for our steamer, fitted for ice working, commanded by a bronzed and fearless master, to whom the danger of ice navigation is an old story, quickly carries us to the margin of the ice and deposits us, with our boats, sledges, dogs and accouterments, upon its surface. Our steamer is not to enter the ice. It is not to engage in combat with the all-conquering king of the north, which has vanquished craft innumerable and which stands like a stone wall, barring all progress by means of ships into his dominions. The ship which carries us is not to be placed in any danger at all—at least not in more danger than is incident to navigation of the ocean in any part of the world. Its duty is to advantage by the opening caused by the gulf stream, by the lee shore of Spitzbergen, to run us early and speedily to the frontier of the inaccessible region and then turn back to the headquarters which we have established at the land near by, to serve during the remainder of the summer as a dispatch boat to and from Norway and in the autumn to pick us up and return us to civilization and home.

Between the 10th and the 15th day of May we expect to be placed upon the margin of the ice. There will be sad hearts in our party no doubt when the ship turns her prow to the south and we are left alone in the desert of ice. But there will be no time for vain regrets. At this moment our active work begins; now commences that campaign which is to carry us to victory or defeat. Here and now we start on that dash for the pole which promises so much and may result in so little. Through the months of May, June, July, August and a part of September this ice pack is to be our home. We leave the land at our backs and strike out boldly across the sea. In something more than 100 days we propose to go as far north as we can go, discover what we can discover and return to our headquarters. How far we shall go and what we shall find there no one has much of an idea. Better than guessing about it is to wait for the sequel.

Far From Land, Within "The Pack."

While we make no predictions, we know what the facts are. We have by no means underrated the difficulties which lie before us. We know that the pack is anything but an easy road to travel. We know it is rough and uneven; that where the floes and fields have crashed together during the storms of the preceding autumn and winter an almost irresistible force has crumbled their margins or upheaved them into what is known as hummocks. We know that as the season advances and the power of the sun, always in the heavens, becomes stronger and more effective, leads or openings form in the ice, narrow, sinuous canals will be found at frequent intervals in our march and the surface of the floes will become more or less covered with slush and water. We know that we shall be troubled much by deep snow, which in a few weeks, under the sun's rays, will become soft and difficult to traverse. We do not forget that down through this region sweeps the only considerable outlet of the Arctic sea—the great current which Dr. Nansen in time hopes to reach, the current which flows between Spitzbergen and Greenland, round Cape Farewell, down past Labrador until it is finally mingled with the waters of the gulf stream off the banks of Newfoundland. It is this current which carries from the very inner regions of the far north which we hope to penetrate the ice fields and bergs encountered by our transatlantic steamships.

The English Record May Be Beaten.

We do not forget, either, that this current defeated the effort which Sir Edward Parry made in this direction and, by means similar to ours, as far back as 1827, in time carrying his men to the south as fast as they could travel to the north, so that their progress was that which a horse makes upon the endless belt of the old-fashioned power machine. If we could not improve upon Parry's methods we should have no right to hope to excel his achievement. But we do improve vastly upon him in plan and equipment, as I shall presently show. With ordinary fortune we should eclipse his achievement. If we do we shall score a success, for Parry, despite a start of a month later, notwithstanding his unnecessarily heavy and clumsy equipment, reached latitude 82 degrees 45 minutes, a record which stood for half a century unbeaten and which to this day has been outdone only forty miles. In more than sixty years, with all the advantages of steam power, with great improvement in the art of sledging, with adaptation of dog power to the burdens which Parry had only men to drag, his achievement has been barely outstripped.

We know this pack can be traversed by men, with more or less speed and with almost certain safety. We know this to be true, because it has been done. Parry traversed the pack, DeLong and Melville traversed it, the Russians have sledged upon it for thousands of miles to the north of Siberia; Payer and Wayprecht escaped over it from Francis Joseph Land to Novaya Zembla, as did Leigh Smith; Capt. Koldewey, the German explorer, lived to travel hundreds of miles through the grinding pack on the east coast of Greenland; Capt. Tyson and his party drifted a thousand miles on an ice floe, passing a whole winter in the waste of water and ice, and being rescued in the spring with the eighteen men, women and children of the party, not only alive, but in perfect health; Greely traversed the restless pack of that narrow, trap-like water, Smith sound, for a distance of 500 miles, only to be snatched in the nick of time from the starvation which had carried off two-thirds of his party after land was made. The pack is not without its dangers, but there is no record in all arctic exploration experience of a life being lost within it.

A Rough Road to Travel.

The region which we are to traverse during the coming summer, over which we are to make our dash for the pole, may, after all, prove more forbidding and uncomfortable than dangerous. That it can be crossed by a sledging party admits of no doubt. Whether or not it can be traveled at a sufficient rate of speed to enable us to do in a single summer what others have failed to do in years, remains to be seen. Speculation as to what we are likely to accomplish must necessarily be of little value, and yet a few facts may prove of interest to the reader. The pack has been traveled at varying rates, from three or four to thirty miles in a day, according to weight of equipment, strength of men and conditions of road. Parry traveled from sixteen to twenty miles per day, but made only four or five net advance on account of the necessity of breaking his loads into from three to four parts and going from five to seven times over most of the road. DeLong and Melville often traveled a total distance of from twenty-five to thirty-two miles in a day, and at the close of this long day's toil had the satisfaction of knowing that they had made a net advance of but two or two and a half miles, having been forced to carry their loads forward in seven parts and thus going thirteen times over the whole road.

How the Pole May Be Conquered.

Our effort is organized upon the assumption that a man or dog carrying or drawing but a moderate load can travel two miles an hour, or twenty to twenty-five miles per day, over the pack. At this rate of speed he could easily, within a hundred days, march from Spitzbergen to the pole and back. The question, therefore, becomes one of energy. The road, though difficult, is not impracticable. The problem is how to carry out a journey of this sort, away from known lands, with but doubtful dependence to be placed upon game secured en route, and yet with burdens light enough, or energy great enough, to permit substantially of the whole load being carried forward all the time without the necessity of constant retraverses. Solve this question, and the problem of approach to the pole from such a base of operations as that which Spitzbergen affords is a problem no longer. It only remains to be demonstrated.

We believe we have found the theoretical solution, and we are now about to attempt the demonstration. Our plan is based upon the belief that with an early start and fairly rapid travel we can pass beyond the region of drift before the drift sets in, and then whilst on our return to the south in the latter part of the summer have the drift in our favor. Our method of operations is purely and distinctively that of a sledging party. We believe that we are about to reduce the art of sledging to a greater state of perfection than was ever before known. Our practice is founded upon the theory that with the use of aluminum for lightness of equipment, of the scientifically concentrated foods of this day for smallest possible weight of provisions, with the use of the most available and adaptable animal power as a supplement to the strength of the men, and all these in combination with special devices designed to apply this energy to advantage or to conserve it, we shall be able approximately to attain the end in view.

Aluminum in the Arctics.

We cannot pause here to describe these features of our equipment fully, but will do so in future articles in The Star, and very interesting articles I believe the reader will find them. It is enough for the present to point out that our outfit contains no startling innovations, nothing that is not both simple and practical, every detail of which has been suggested by the arctic experience of others. All arctic effort has been studied with a view to avoiding the mistakes of past expeditions, as well as to profit by those features of their equipment which proved advantageous. We believe, and in this view are supported by men whose experience makes their judgment worth more than ours, that we shall enter upon our task with the best equipment for a sledging expedition that was ever employed in the arctics.

If our outfit has any distinguishing feature, it is the free use of aluminum in the construction of boats, sledges and other devices. Aluminum is a wonderful metal, as yet little understood. It has its great advantages and also its limitations. It has proved itself especially adaptable to our uses, as is shown by the fact that we have built the first aluminum boats in America, and that they are the strongest, most serviceable and lightest boats of their size ever made in the world.

Warmth of the Polar Summer.

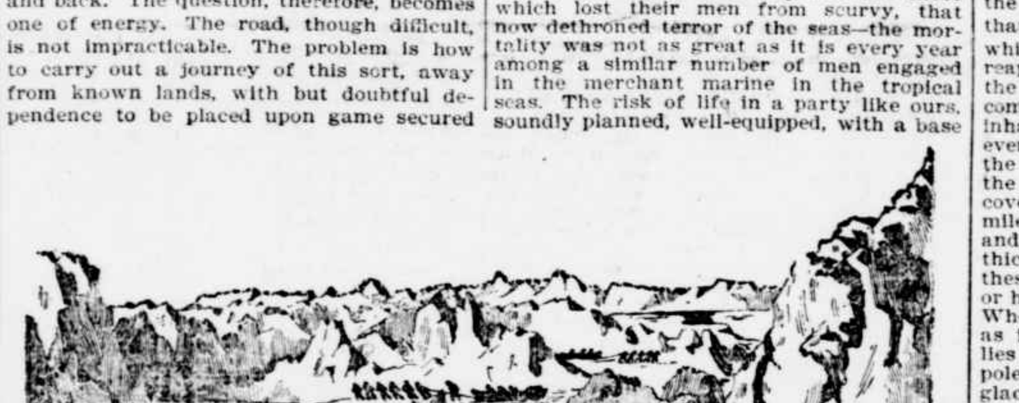
A tremendous advantage which we shall enjoy in our summer dash for the pole is that we do not have to go prepared for extreme cold weather. We shall encounter a temperature that is rather too warm than too cold. We shall suffer more from heat and from the brightness of the sun than from frost. The arctic summer is like the winter of the latitude of Washington, Cincinnati and St. Louis, with this striking difference, that the arctic summer has no night and a surprisingly equable temperature. In all the time that we are away on this journey we do not expect to see the mercury as low as zero, Fahrenheit. If it approaches zero at all it will be during the first half of May, just as we are entering upon our work. After the first of June the temperature is not likely to fall as low as 20 above zero, and after June, which is the spring of the arctics, the mercury will hover about the freezing point in the shade, now a degree or two above and again below, but with fluctuations within the narrow limits of ten degrees. In the sun the mercury will frequently rise to 60, 70 or 80 degrees, and in July and August we shall probably work many a day as men are working in the harvest and haying fields at home—in our shirt sleeves. This delightful working temperature is to our advantage in many ways. It raises the value of our energy 50 per cent above that shown by sledging parties in the frightful cold of early spring or late autumn. It does not require us to carry furs, and but little in the way of heavy clothing and bedding will be needed. We shall not be often or long delayed by storms, though now and then snow and sleet, and more often dense fog, caused by the enormous evaporation resulting from the constant action of the sun's rays, may interfere with our progress.

The Caravan in the Ice.

We shall set out in our march across the ice with fourteen men, forty draught dogs and a total weight of about 5,500 pounds in boats, sledges, instruments, clothing, fuel and food. In round numbers we shall have about 100 pounds per unit of power, or to each man and dog. Such a load, experience has shown, can be taken forward at a single march without the necessity of retraversing, except now and then where the difficulties of the road are extraordinary. If this shall prove to be the case with us, then we might hope to advance at the rate of from twelve to twenty miles per day. If we can do the smaller distance, or even but ten miles per day, ten days will carry us well into the pack, beyond the region of early summer breaking up and driftage. Twenty days will carry us perhaps to lands which have never before been explored, but which are believed to exist to the north and perhaps a little east of Spitzbergen. Twenty-five days will carry us to a point farther north than man has ever reached, and only one-half of the time which we may prudently use in the advance will have been consumed. With twenty-five days more of safe season for the northward march, how near to the pole do you think we can get? We will give you the answer when we return next autumn.

Arctic Work Not Extremely Dangerous.

The only thing that we feel certain of is that we shall return—not only to Spitzbergen in September, but to Norway and to America before Thanksgiving day. As a winter resort Washington has more attractiveness for the members of our party than the sunless north. Even the north pole as the far end of an excursion has no fascinations for us without return tickets and a chance to use them. Of what use to solve the problem without living to tell the story? Doubtless it is true the public is weary of the sacrifice of life in the northern regions. The people have read enough of arctic horrors, of starvation, of perishing with cold and disease. Fond of adventure and of deeds of daring as they are, many men have come to the conclusion that the arctic mystery is not worth the candle that is burned in human life. Yet the truth is that three conspicuous arctic disasters, those of Franklin, of Greely and of DeLong, have filled the popular mind with exaggerated ideas of the dangers of the far north. The public forgets the hundreds of expeditions that have gone out and returned in safety, and overlooks the fact that of all arctic expeditions known to history, those well and those ill planned, those which went on such foolish errands as a search for the north pole in a ship and also those which lost their men from scurvy, that now dethroned terror of the seas—the mortality was not as great as it is every year among a similar number of men engaged in the merchant marine in the tropical seas. The risk of life in a party like ours, soundly planned, well-equipped, with a base of supplies properly placed for falling back upon, is so small as scarcely to deserve consideration.



TRAVELING OVER THE ICE PACK.

And yet we go, as men should always go in the arctics, prepared for a great variety of emergencies. While our plan is to return home in the autumn, we have not lost sight of the possibility of being compelled to winter at Spitzbergen. We expect to return to Spitzbergen from our dash for the pole about the middle of September, though the little hunting vessels of the daring Norwegians often leave Spitzbergen as late as the first or even the middle of October, reaching Tromsoe or Hammerfest soon afterward. But if some unforeseen delay or accident should render wintering in that cheerless region unavoidable, we shall have at hand the means of doing it. At Dane's Island we shall have house, food, fuel. But these are placed there only as a precaution, and with the expectation that there is no more than one chance in a hundred of their use.

Must Return to Headquarters.

We are often asked what will happen to us if we do not get back to Spitzbergen. Just what happens to a man who goes down in a coal mine and has the shaft cave in on him; precisely the same thing that happens to the man who suffers a stroke of complete final heart failure, or to the passenger in the last seat of the rear coach when there is a tail-end collision. In other words, we must return to our headquarters. If we make the pole or our farthest north in fifty days, when our loads are heaviest, and when whatever drift there is works against us, why can we not return over the same road in the same number of days with our loads growing lighter all the time by consumption of food and fuel, and with the drift which sets in to the south about the middle of the summer carrying us toward safety while we sleep? Nor is this all. If we consume fifty or even fifty-five days in our northward advance, there is every reason to believe we shall still have sixty or more days in which to reach our headquarters in ample time to leave for Norway before the west coast of Spitzbergen is crowded with the autumn ice. Simply to reach Spitzbergen, which will be safety, even at the inconvenience of a tedious wintering, we should have for the return journey at least eighty days before the setting in of winter. Again, on our return from the far north in September it is probable we shall find the sea comparatively free of ice for a distance of 100 miles to the north of the shores of Spitzbergen. The highest latitude ever reached with a ship was made in this same region. Wherever the edge of the ice is there our stanch little steamer is to be waiting for us, thus shortening by so much the length of our return journey upon the pack.

The Question of Food.

It is true that we are going provisioned for only 110 days, and should our journey be extended beyond that period we might run short of supplies. But there is enough elasticity in our equipment to provide for such an emergency. We count on a bear now and then, for ice bear have been found as far north in the pack as man has ever been. An occasional bear would be a great addition to our larder, for he weighs from 500 to 1,000 pounds. There are seal in the pack ice, too, and though seal blubber is not the most appetizing of meat, hunger is a sauce which makes the palate easy to satisfy. Then there are our dogs, our handsome, long-eared draught hounds from Belgium and Holland, which it would be a pity to lead to the shambles, and which we would much rather bring to America. But necessity knows no law, and we might find it necessary, indeed, it is probable we shall, to put into operation the rule of dog eat dog. We may try a few fresh dog steaks ourselves. A great advantage of the use of dog power is the ease with which your power can be transformed into food for the remaining dogs or the men. If a man falls ill you cannot leave him behind. If he dies, or his services in the drag-ropes are no longer needed, you cannot put him in the pot.

To the Heart of the Unknown Region.

Many people find it difficult to perceive wherein one polar expedition differs from another, either in plan or purpose. Having now briefly described the plan of this expedition, leaving some of the features to be more adequately presented in future papers, it is pertinent to ask the question, whyfore? What is it that we propose to accomplish? The answer is—not to explore a bit of coast somewhere in the arctics; not to determine whether a certain land extends a few miles more or less in one direction; not to wander about the frontiers of the unknown region; not to nibble at the edge of the question. Our ambitions are higher than any of these, worthy and in some respects important though they are. Our aim is to drive straight for the heart of the unknown region, to the spot which contains within its icy breast the mystery of the arctics, to solve, if possible, what is known to geographers and scientists as the polar problem.

Mankind set out centuries ago to accomplish this task. He long ago determined that the great white sphynx should speak. It is safe to say that he will persist in his efforts till some adventurous traveler, more fortunate than his predecessors, will achieve what has been so long struggled for. If we fail therein it shall not be for lack of ambition or effort.

For two centuries this arctic problem has engaged the attention of adventurous men of all northern races. The two great English-speaking peoples, the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Dutch, the Russians, have sent almost innumerable expeditions to the arctics. The French and Austrians have at times joined the hunt, while even the sons of sunny Italy have had their trial at the ice-beleaugered mystery. If any one imagines that man is going to stop in this effort bcause now and then a few lives are lost, he is very much mistaken. It is the history of the race that it never goes backward. Having set his face toward the pole, man will never wholly abandon the quest. Until human nature is radically changed these efforts will be continued, and until man becomes more than human there will be the keenest popular interest in these attempts to penetrate the region of the unknown. The search after knowledge, as Prof. Heilprin has said, "has no limits and knows no time." What earnest desire for knowledge does not prompt is found in love of adventure. The two aspirations are so mingled in the human breast that it is difficult to say where one ends and the other begins. Kindly critics will say of us, no doubt, that love of adventure is a stronger incentive than pursuit of knowledge. Possibly this is true. It is useless to argue the point. The main thing is not the ambition which impels us, but what we accomplish, how much of a contribution we make to the world's knowledge of the world; and as to that neither the critics nor ourselves can now say, but the results must determine.

Science Awaits the Answer.

Every important science which has for its object knowledge of our earth runs against a great blank space beyond the 80th parallel of north latitude. Until we know what exists beyond that line these sciences must remain incomplete, unsatisfactory. Already the theorists have done their best, or their worst, to solve the problem. On one side is the belief in an open polar sea, the theory that owing to the action of the gulf stream, which is supposed to dive under the ice and reappear farther north, there is formed in the region of the pole a land of climate comparatively mild, habitable and possibly inhabited by a race of men who have forever lived isolated from the remainder of the world. At the other extreme we find the theory that the region of the pole is covered with an eternal ice cap, some 600 miles in diameter, resting upon both land and sea, and thousands of feet in vertical thickness! Who shall say that either of these theories is right or wrong? Both are or have been supported by men of learning. Who shall decide between them, or declare, as is much more probable, that the truth lies midway their extremes, and that the pole is surrounded by lands which are glacier-capped, while the sea is covered with a network of pack ice, frozen solid in winter and drifting about in summer? Who shall close the gaps for science, prepare the way for completing the circle of knowledge? None but the man who penetrates far enough within the unknown area to find the answer, and lives to bring it back.

Can the Arctic Problem Be Solved?

When we say that the north pole is the ideal objective point of our journey we mean thereby that the pole is symbolical of the central part of the unknown region. It is at the pole or in its neighborhood that the solution of the arctic problem is to be found. Geographers and men of science agree that penetration beyond the 85th or perhaps to the 86th parallel is, for the purpose of solving the arctic mystery, as good as reaching that precise point at which the northern axis of our earth terminates, where all lines of longitude converge and where there is no direction but south. Our success from a geographical and scientific point of view therefore will be in crossing the circle which surrounds the pole at a distance of 350 statute miles from it. Our greatest success from the popular standpoint will be in reaching the pole itself, or at least in approaching near enough to it to be able to say that it has been substantially within our grasp. From our headquarters at Dane's Island to the pole, in a direct line, the distance is 700 statute miles; to the 85th parallel, which at least we hope to pass, it is 350 miles. One hundred miles short of this parallel marks the farthest north yet achieved by man, and that was done by two brave Americans, Lockwood and Brainard.

It is further agreed by the best students of the polar question, both in England and America, that the first expedition to enter this unknown region need not and perhaps should not be wholly of a scientific character. It should be practical rather than scientific. It should be an exploring party, simply—a pioneering party. If it can find the practicable road to the pole and show the means of traveling it, larger parties more fully equipped for careful scientific inquiry will surely follow in its track. To do this much is the aim of the present expedition. At the same time, while holding the character of a pioneering party, we shall endeavor, in case we are successful in reaching high latitudes, to make studies and observations of meteorological and physical conditions that will prove of value to science. For this purpose we take out an admirable set of instruments, and have the benefit of the counsel of Prof. Mendenhall of the coast survey and other eminent scientific men.

A Newspaper Exploring Expedition.

Exploration, valuable additions to man's knowledge of his earth, important scientific observations, possible solution of what is known as the polar problem—these are not the only purposes of this expedition. It is a newspaper effort. For the first time, it is believed, a newspaper writer leads an expedition into the arctics. I have always believed that if the north pole were worth discovering at all, if the arctic mystery were worth solving, it should be a newspaper man that does it. Who has a better right to solve mysteries, to discover that which man has so long found undiscoverable and inaccessible? The enterprise and energy of the American press are proverbial throughout the world. Some of the greatest feats of travel and exploration have been accomplished by American journalists. If we should be so fortunate as to succeed in a field where so many have failed, none will be more glad therefor than the generous, manly newspaper makers of America. So far as I am personally concerned, this effort is in line with my profession. It is worthy and dignified, and the honor of it does not consist in good fortune and great success, but in doing the best one can. I shall at least do my best to give the readers of The Star interesting and accurate accounts of what we are trying to do and how we progress in the effort.

Dispatches From the Farthest North.

Not only shall we write the story of our adventures in real life, illustrated from photographs, but we shall, if our plans carry well, do what was never done before, and that is to send dispatches from the inner regions of the arctic world. Ordinarily an arctic expedition is not heard from till its return—one, two or three years after its departure. We shall do better. We have a line of communication which is designed to enable us to send The Star descriptive matter and photographs from the farthest north while we are still in the field.

Our supporting party of seven men accompanies us to the north from our headquarters only some twenty or twenty-five days. In this time we shall hope to accomplish from 250 to 300 miles of northing. If we do only 250, or even less, we shall, about the 10th of June, be farther north than man ever was before. Our supporting party now turns back, reaching Spitzbergen about July 1st. There our steamer awaits them, and carries to Norway the dispatches, letters, photographs and artists' sketches, which they bear from our perch away up on the top of the big globe. In three or four days, if all goes right, our steamer will be at Tromsoe, and the Atlantic cable will bear you a dispatch announcing that we have been heard from, and that when heard from we were nearer the pole than man had before penetrated, and were still going north!

An International Race for the Pole.

There are other expeditions in the field, and this is to be a momentous year in arctic work. Dr. Nansen, bravest of the brave, the ideal arctic explorer, is now in the ice in his stanch little ship the Fram, to the north of the Siberian Islands, near where the Jeannette was sunk. Lieut. Peary, persistent, successful, resourceful, is at his house in McCormick Bay, West Greenland, whence he will set out in about six weeks for northernmost Greenland and the pole, if the land shall lead him so far. Mr. Stein of this city is the projector of a commendable and deserving plan for further exploration of Ellesmere Land, which is now only in part known. In May we shall be in the eternal ice, pressing northward as fast as we can go. Of the three important parties, ours is the one of which the world will naturally expect the least in the way of results. Nansen and Peary are the veterans, we the amateurs. They have writtten their names high on the roll of honor, while we have done nothing. Not one of us has ever been nearer the pole than Norway or Alaska. We have yet to be tried amid the difficulties and dangers of arctic travel, and before we can claim or expect confidence must earn it in the field. Until we have done this we ask no other consideration than fair play and a willingness to await results before passing judgment.

Between Peary, Nansen and ourselves there will this year be an international race for the pole. Frederick Jackson, an Englishman, talks of starting by way of Francis Joseph Land, and we sincerely hope he may enter the field. The more of us the merrier, and may the best man win.

The pole is worth winning, not only in the spirit of friendly rivalry, not alone in the desire for fame, notoriety or whatever you choose to call it, but from higher motives mingled with these. For those who identify the progress of civilization with a search after truth it is not necessary to argue the value of arctic exploration. That question was answered a half century ago by that stern friend of knowledge, Sir John Barrow, when he wrote:

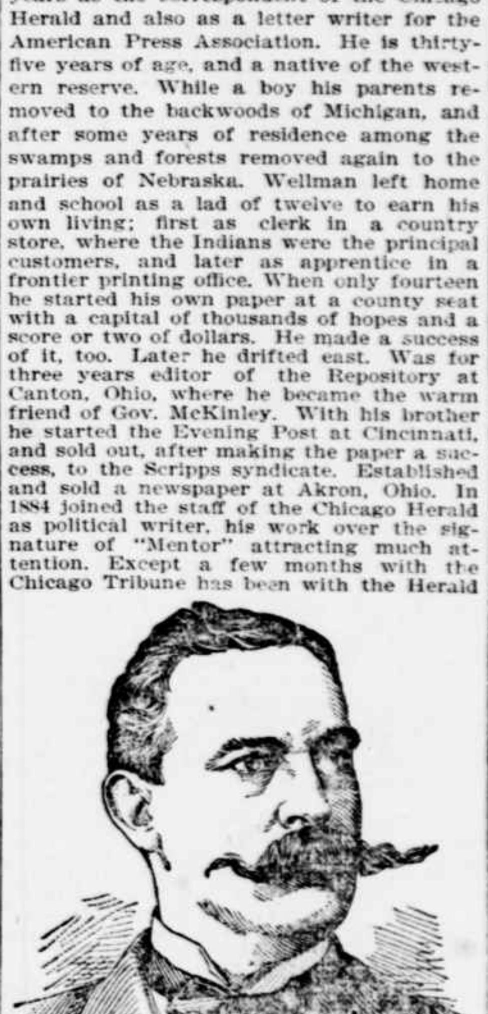
"The north pole is the only thing in the world about which we know nothing; and that want of all knowledge ought to operate as a spur to adopt the means of wiping away that stain of ignorance from this enlightened age."

WALTER WELLMAN.

MEMBERS OF THE POLAR PARTY.

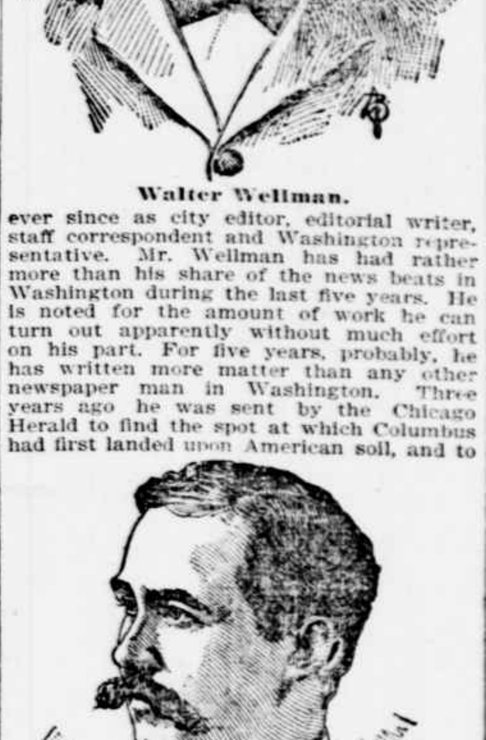
Something About the Men Who Are to Make This Sensational Effort.

Walter Wellman, leader of this expedition, is one of the best-known newspaper men in Washington, where he has served for five years as the correspondent of the Chicago Herald and also as a letter writer for the American Press Association. He is thirty-five years of age, and a native of the western reserve. While a boy his parents removed to the backwoods of Michigan, and after some years of residence among the swamps and forests removed again to the prairies of Nebraska. Wellman left home and school as a lad of twelve to earn his own living; first as clerk in a country store, where the Indians were the principal customers, and later as apprentice in a frontier printing office. When only fourteen he started his own paper at a county seat with a capital of thousands of hopes and a score or two of dollars. He made a success of it, too. Later he drifted east. Was for three years editor of the Repository at Canton, Ohio, where he became the warm friend of Gov. McKinley. With his brother he started the Evening Post at Cincinnati, and sold out, after making the paper a success, to the Scripps syndicate. Established and sold a newspaper at Akron, Ohio. In 1884 joined the staff of the Chicago Herald as political writer, his work over the signature of "Mentor" attracting much attention. Except a few months with the Chicago Tribune has been with the Herald



Walter Wellman.

ever since as city editor, editorial writer, staff correspondent and Washington representative. Mr. Wellman has had rather more than his share of the news beats in Washington during the last five years. He is noted for the amount of work he can turn out apparently without much effort on his part. For five years, probably, he has written more matter than any other newspaper man in Washington. Three years ago he was sent by the Chicago Herald to find the spot at which Columbus had first landed upon American soil, and to



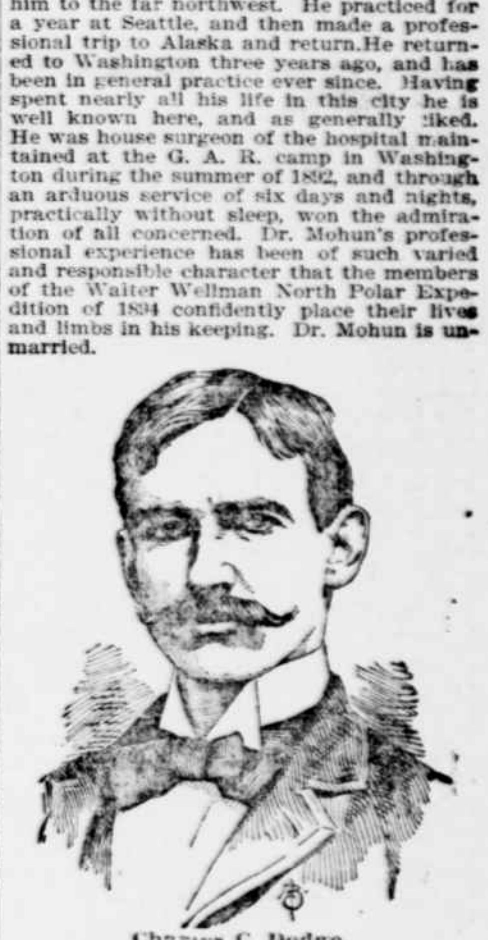
Owen B. French.

erect a monument there. The manner in which he performed this task attracted wide attention, and the correctness of his location of the spot has since been indorsed by Clements R. Markham, president of the Royal Geographical Society, and other geographers. Mr. Wellman has for years been a close student of the arctic problem, and last year visited Europe to pursue his investigations and to make preliminary arrangements for this expedition. Mr. Wellman is married, and the father of five girls. He is the president of the National Capital Press Club.

Owen B. French, the astronomer and scientist of the expedition, is a native of Cleveland, Ohio, twenty-eight years old. After leaving the common schools he decided to become a civil engineer, and in 1888 graduated from the Case School of Applied Science, one of the best polytechnic schools in this country. He then took to the field, and served as topographer on a railway survey in Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia. In 1889 he joined the coast survey, and was assigned to field duty near Pensacola, Fla. He was then placed in charge of a topographical party at work on Perdido bay, and also assisted in the hydrography. The three summer seasons of '90, '91 and '92 were spent on the primary transcontinental triangulation in Utah, Colorado and Nevada, where all the work is at an elevation of from 10,000 to 15,000 feet above the sea. In '90 and '91 he assisted at the astronomical work, magnetic observations and the trigonometrical leveling. In '93 he was given entire charge of important parts of the work. During the winter of '91 and '92 he was assigned to duty in the party detailed to locate astronomically a number of points along the Mexican boundary between El Paso and the Pacific, his share of the work being the observations for latitude and the magnetic elements. The winter of '92 and '93 was again spent in field work in Florida, and in March, '93, he was assigned to duty as astronomer on the determination of the boundary between Alaska and British Columbia. Having completed this work he returned to Washington and took up the reduction of observations at the office of the coast survey. In January last he was appointed a member of the geodetic conference now in progress in Washington. Mr. French has the confidence of Superintendent Mendenhall of the coast survey to an unusual extent, and his reputation as a field worker, as a scientist and as a man is all that could be desired. He is not married.

Dr. Thomas B. Mohun.

Dr. Thomas B. Mohun, the physician and surgeon of this expedition, is forty years old and a native of Washington. His father was a lumber merchant and one of the early residents of the capital. Dr. Mohun was educated for business, but in 1882 retired from commercial life and took up medicine, graduating from the medical department of Columbian University. He was for one year resident physician of the Washington Asylum Hospital, when his desire for travel and change of scenes led him to the far northwest. He practiced for a year at Seattle, and then made a professional trip to Alaska and return. He returned to Washington three years ago, and has been in general practice ever since. Having spent nearly all his life in this city he is well known here, and as generally liked. He was house surgeon of the hospital maintained at the G. A. R. camp in Washington during the summer of 1892, and through an arduous service of six days and nights, practically without sleep, won the admiration of all concerned. Dr. Mohun's professional experience has been of such varied and responsible character that the members of the Walter Wellman North Polar Expedition of 1894 confidently place their lives and limbs in his keeping. Dr. Mohun is unmarried.



Charles C. Dodge.

Charles C. Dodge, the artist and photographer of the expedition, is thirty years old and a native of Boston. He was educated in the public schools there and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While a boy he ran away from home and served for a time on a fishing schooner on the banks of Newfoundland. Was for a time employed in Chicago making illustrations for newspaper and other use, and for a number of years has been in the construction division of the Navy Department as designer and draughtsman. He has done a good deal of work on the big war vessels of the new navy, and has also designed yachts and other craft for private firms. Mr. Dodge was the designer of the boats constructed of aluminum for this expedition, and shows his faith in his works by going in them. He is an enthusiastic sportsman, a crack shot and experienced in all sorts of roughing and exposure. Many of his marine illustrations have been used in the Cosmopolitan and other magazines, and to the art of photography he has devoted a great deal of attention. Mr. Dodge expects to develop his negatives in the field, even while the sun is shining twenty-four hours per day. Mr. Dodge is married and has one child.

Married Without Knowing It.

From the Kansas City Times.

Father Tihen of Wichita was in town a day or two ago and told the following story:

"You never heard of the time I married a couple before they knew it? Well, soon after I was made a priest, I was engaged to perform a marriage ceremony. It was to be a swell wedding. I arrived at the house rather early, according to request, and was taken upstairs at once. There I laid aside my hat and overcoat, and then the bride's mother knocked at the door and said her daughter wished to see me. Of course, I obeyed the summons, but was surprised to learn that the couple wanted the marriage ceremony performed in an upstairs room immediately. I thought it was very queer, but went through the ceremony, and married them fast and sure right there. When the ceremony was over, the bride said 'Now, we will go down into the parlor and be married.'

"'But you are married already,' I exclaimed. 'I can't go through the ceremony again.'

"And then I learned that all they wanted was 'to practice' the ceremony, so as to go through it properly when in the midst of their friends. But there was no help for it. Married they were, and I couldn't repeat the ceremony, which, with us, is a sacrament."

The Stumper Stumped.

From Puck.

Mrs. Spouter—"Where are you going tonight, John?"

Mr. Spouter—"I am due, my dear, to address the Consolidated Cohorts of the Home Industries of Hohokus."

Mrs. Spouter—"If you would stop your talking and do more working several home industries I know of would prosper better. Hustle down, now, and bring up the coal!"